DC
THE BAT AND THE CAT (AND THE BAT) PART 4 OF 5
BATMAN
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FABIAN NICIEZA
KEVIN MAGUIRE

From the Barbara Gordon granny-panty files:
Third grade: Mrs. Pimbelstock catches me and Johnny Bonaventura kissing during recess.
High School: I drop my valedictorian speech and bark out a curse... right into the microphone.
College Junior: Billy Northwaite + vodka + chili dogs = Never See Billy Northwaite again. Sigh.
Tonight...
the CAT and the BAT
PART FOUR
FABIAN NICIEZA & KEV N MAGUIRE
Story Art & Cover
I L L · Colors
SAL CIPRIANO · Letters
TOM PALMER JR · Associate Editor
MIKE CARLIN · Editor
BATMAN created by BOB KANE

...Batman shows up in the middle of my cat-fight.
SO... TELL ME SHE'S NOT YOUR GIRLFRIEND...?
And there, just when I thought we couldn't sink any lower...
YOUR PET. OKAY I COULD UNDERSTAND BUT I NEVER SAW YOU AS THE FRECKLES TYPE.
AND HER SKIN? SO... VANILLA. HAVE YOU SEEN HER NAKED? I HAVE.
GNYEEEEARRGH!
ENOUGH. WHAT'S GOING ON?

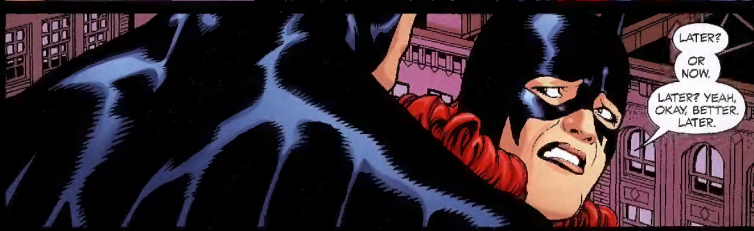
WELL, YOU KNOW HOW IT IS WHEN THE BIG, BAD BATMAN GOES OFF ON TOP-SECRET JUSTICE LEAGUE BUSINESS--
-- SOMEONE HAS TO PROTECT POOR OL' GOTHAM--
WHICH EXPLAINS THE BATGIRL.
OH, TOUCHÉ!
BUT WHO IS GOING TO PROTECT HER?
YOU KNOW HOW I GET WHEN INNOCENT GIRLS ARE... EXPOSED...
... TO THE... SEAMIER SIDE OF THE CITY...
...I GET ALL HOT...AND... BOTHERED...

UHM... CAN YOU STOP... PLEASE...
CATWOMAN STOLE COMMISSIONER GORDON'S NOTEBOOK--
--HAS ALL HIS OPEN CASEWORK WRITTEN DOWN--

--AND WE.. UH... LOST TRACK OF IT--
--UHM... THE RUSSIAN MOB TOOK IT.
BUT I PUT A TRACER ON IT!
OH, DON'T GIVE ME THAT LOOK...
HOW DID YOU GET HOLD OF IT?

Don't say it...
I TOOK IT FROM GORDON'S DAUGHTER.
I hate her.

WONDER WHY SHE TOOK IT, HUH?
I CAN EXPLAIN.

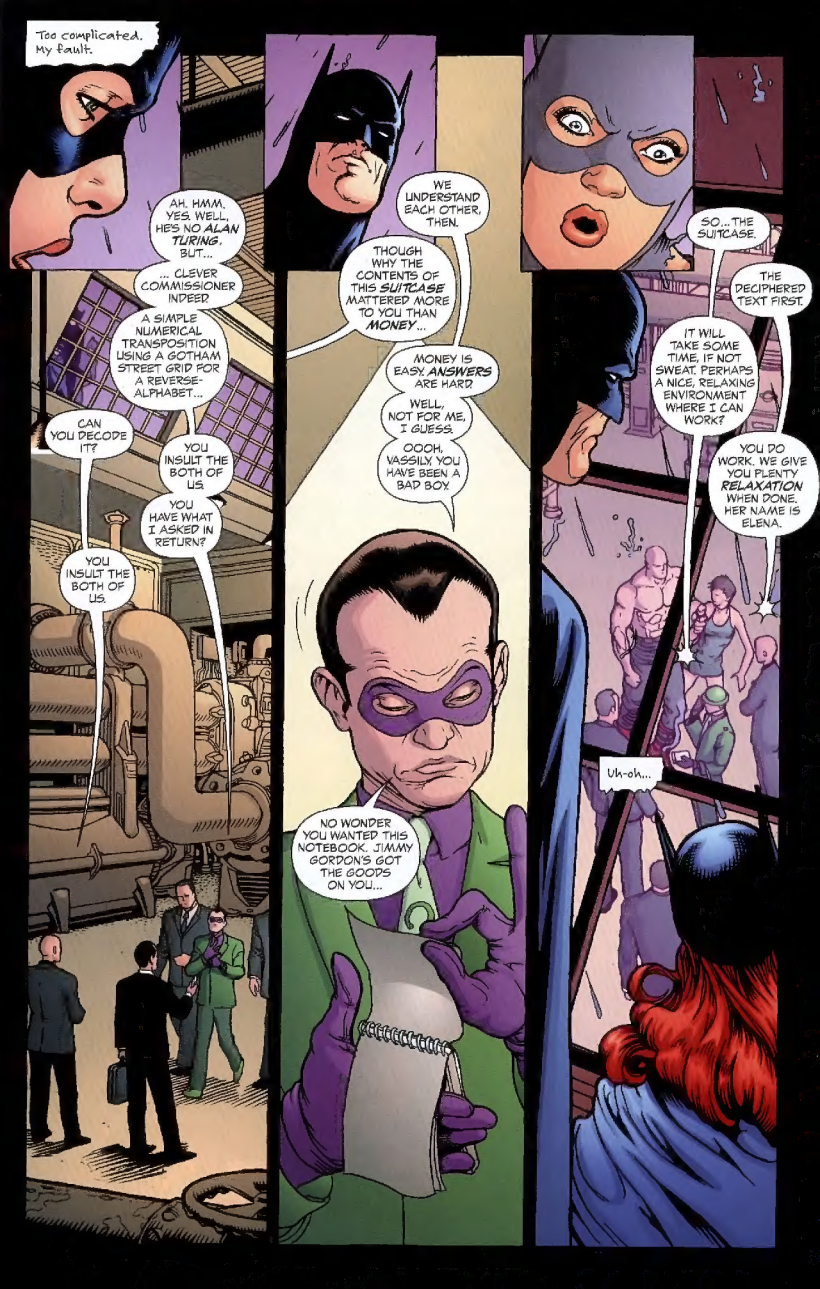

LATER?
OR NOW.
LATER? YEAH, OKAY, BETTER. LATER.

WE HAVE TO GET THE NOTEBOOK BACK.
WAIT. IT'S MORE THAN JUST THAT!
THIS MOB FACTION IS KEEPING AN IMMIGRANT GIRL AS A SLAVE.
THEY OFFERED HER SAFETY FOR THE BOOK?
IF THAT WORKS FOR YOU.
SHE TRIED USING THE BOOK TO BAIT A LARGER RUSSIAN FAMILY INTO PRESSURING THE DAVIDOVITCH BROTHERS TO LET HER GO.
DETAILS.
LET'S FOCUS HERE. WE HAVE SOME RUSSIANS TO PUMMEL!
SORRY, CATWOMAN. I ONLY BROUGHT THE TWO-SEATER.
I hate her.

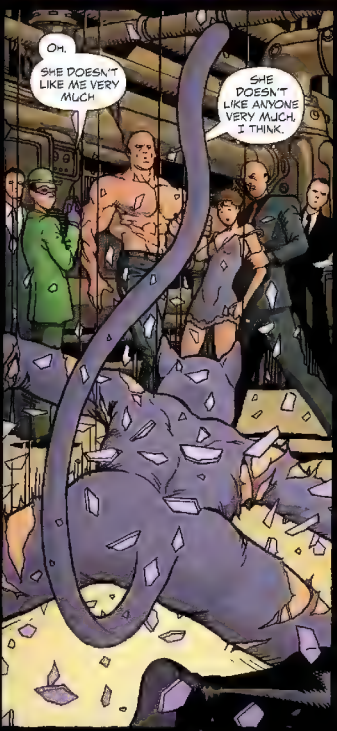
She looks mad.
Guess I don't blame her.
I'll make sure Elena is okay.
Nice to know he picked me over her, though...
NOW...
Uh-oh.
WHY DID YOU TAKE YOUR FATHER'S NOTEBOOK, BARBARA?
HE'S AWAY ON BUSINESS-- I WANTED TO SEE--
--WHAT HE KNEW--
--ABOUT ME--AND THIS--
--AND YOU--AND THAT--
BUT IT WAS IN CODE.
YEAH. I DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO BREAK IT.
WE'RE GETTING CLOSER.
PING PING PING
THE RUSSIAN MOB RUNS THE DOCKS NOW.
VASSILY DAVIDOVITCH WORKS OUT OF WAREHOUSE THIRTY-FOUR.
Is there anything he doesn't know?

We make out a single guard.
The Russians are new to Gotham.
They have a lot to learn.
Next time, they'll have two dozen posted.
It still won't be enough.
I can't tell if he's mad at me.
My own selfishness, my damned curiosity...
It all got too complicated.
(HE IS LATE.)
(HE IS COMING.)
OF COURSE.

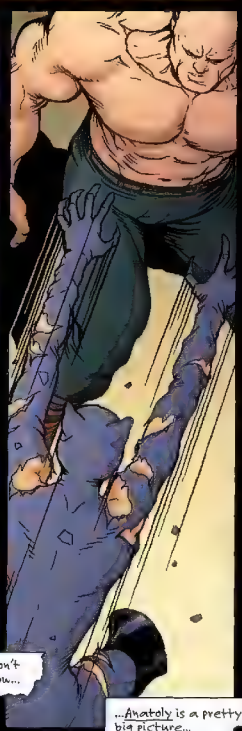
WHEN YOU HAVE ME...
... YOU WANT TO SHARE ME...
... BUT WHEN YOU SHARE ME...
... YOU NO LONGER HAVE ME.
WHAT AM I?
A SECRET.


Too complicated. My fault.
AH. HMM. YES. WELL, HE'S NO ALAN TURING, BUT...
... CLEVER COMMISSIONER INDEED
A SIMPLE NUMERICAL TRANSPOSITION USING A GOTHAM STREET GRID FOR A REVERSE-ALPHABET...
CAN YOU DECODE IT?
YOU INSULT THE BOTH OF US
YOU HAVE WHAT I ASKED IN RETURN?
YOU INSULT THE BOTH OF US
WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER, THEN.
THOUGH WHY THE CONTENTS OF THIS SUITCASE MATTERED MORE TO YOU THAN MONEY...
MONEY IS EASY. ANSWERS ARE HARD
WELL, NOT FOR ME, I GUESS.
OOOH, VASSILY, YOU HAVE BEEN A BAD BOY.
NO WONDER YOU WANTED THIS NOTEBOOK. JIMMY GORDON'S GOT THE GOODS ON YOU...
SO... THE SUITCASE.
THE DECIPHERED TEXT FIRST.
IT WILL TAKE SOME TIME, IF NOT SWEAT. PERHAPS A NICE, RELAXING ENVIRONMENT WHERE I CAN WORK?
YOU DO WORK. WE GIVE YOU PLENTY RELAXATION WHEN DONE. HER NAME IS ELENA.
Uh-oh...

NO...
KERASHKK


OH.
SHE DOESN'T LIKE ME VERY MUCH
SHE DOESN'T LIKE ANYONE VERY MUCH, I THINK.

WAIT
WHY?
BIGGER PICTURE.
I don't know...


...Anatoly is a pretty big picture...

I ADHERE TO A STRICT POLICY OF INJURY AVOIDANCE, VASSILY.
CALL ME WHEN YOU CAN CONTINUE OUR BUSINESS UNIMPEDED.
WAIT
HE'S GOT THE NOTEBOOK.
BIGGER PICTURE.
SELINA...

WHOM
GGMMFK
PRASSTT
AAGH--!
THE SHOT PUNCTURED A STEAM LINE!
FUNNY.
NNRFFS-!

BATMAN...
WAIT
GIVE IT
YOUR BEST SHOT
No...
FWW/TUNK
I waited long enough!
He's gonna be mad.
(I don't care!)

THE GUN--?
-HACK-
Hairball?
HEY, VASSILY!!
WHAT--?
THUNK
CMON...
SPASIBO
POZHALSTA
SHE NEED HELP?
YOU'RE SAFE, ELENA. I GOT WHAT I WANTED.
GOOD LUCK THERE, FRECKLES.

Hate.
Her.
ANATOLY DAVIDOVITCH...

...THE WAIT IS OVER.
YOU ARE THAT BAT-MAN?
HEH. YOU ARE JUST A MAN.
IN SILLY SARAFAN LIKE SOME WOMAN!
I CAN CRUSH YOU!
I WILL CRUSH YOU--
--THEN I WILL TAKE YOUR WOMAN!

WHAK
One punch?
VASS LY GOT AWAY.
HE LEFT. THAT DOESN'T MEAN HE'S GOTTEN AWAY.

I'M GOING AFTER THE SUITCASE.
THE NOTE-BOOK S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.
Okay.
Was that a vote of confidence--
--or a warning?
Either way...
.. I'm going to toast the Riddler!
PING PING PING
Raining harder.
Maybe my dad's flight back will get delayed?
Maybe not.
PING PING PING
Still in the Narrows. Due east.
Not far.
Only a couple blocks away.
Oh...

Arkham Asylum.
Secondary service door is open.
Where are the guards?
The night staff?
RIDDLE ME THIS, BATGIRL...
He's on the intercom? Has he accessed the main security control room?

IF THE SAYING IS TRUE THAT WHEN ONE DOOR CLOSES--
SHUMK
--ANOTHER ONE OPENS--
Son of a--
SHUUUNN
--WHAT HAPPENS IF ALL THE DOORS OPEN AT THE SAME TIME?
SHUUUNN
Answer: The Batgirl dies!
TO BE CONCLUDED!

When I first sat down with incredibly talented **Joe Straczynski** and discussed the various projects he could do here at DC, the conversation weaved its way through so many of our characters that it only made sense to offer him a book where he could work with every one of them. That book was BRAVE AND BOLD, and not surprisingly, he quickly accepted. After all, this was a chance for him to write every character we talked about. We were all set to go – first up, Batman and Spectre; the script was written and ready to be illustrated. But then, something changed.

During my conversations with Joe about BRAVE AND BOLD we talked about the early days of the series, before Batman was the constant co-star. We talked about how *we saw some real add team-ups (Metamorpho and Metal Men) but also, and more* interestingly, how the series was a showcase for new and returning characters (particularly the Earth-2 characters at that time). That part of our conversation always stuck in my mind; to be honest, I never wanted this to be just another team-up book. So I started to make some calls. It was time to try something a little different.

In the '90s DC Comics licensed the rights to the Archie super-hero characters and introduced a new line of comics branded Impact! While that line met with varying degrees of success, there is no denying that the characters –The Fly, Shield, Black Hood, Jaguar, The Web, and their team, Mighty Crusaders – had plenty of life in them, and comic book fans wanted to see them back in action. So after numerous calls, multiple meetings, several lunches and a couple of presentations, a deal came together, and DC reacquired these rights, this time with a slightly different twist. This time we are going back to basics, and rather than working in their own world, they get to join the party. No separate line, they will all be part of the DC Universe.

How cool is that? And on top of everything, when I pitched it to Joe, he was as *excited as I am!*

I can't think of a better fit for the DC Universe or a better person to handle the reintroduction and reimagining of these characters. The DCU just got a little bigger and a little better, but why stop there….

More next week.

To be continued…

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DC NATION

For a complete list of this week's titles, sneak peeks, breaking news and more, visit us at dccomics.com

Next in…

BATMAN CONFIDENTIAL #21

Commissioner Gordon's notebook.

THE HOT LIST THIS WEEK

ACTION COMICS #868

FINAL CRISIS: REVELATIONS #1

WONDER WOMAN #23

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